A Phenomenological Study on Lived Experience of Suffering in Suicide Attempters

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Abstract

Purpose
The purpose of the study was to understand essential meanings of suffering experienced by suicide attempters.

Methods
Data were collected in 2009 through individual narrative interviews from 7 suicide attempters. Texts from literary works and movies containing suicide were also included as data. Data were analyzed using the hermeneutic phenomenology of van Manen.

Results
Thirteen themes were identified in four dimensions. In the dimension of ‘lived body’, ‘unbearably sweet temptation to death’, ‘body surrendered by emotional damage’, ‘chaos in life and death’, ‘squashed body by the heavy weight of life’, and ‘loss of meaning in life’ were identified. ‘The black hole, one is not able to get out’ represents the experience in the dimension of ‘lived space’, ‘The moment on the edge of a profound abyss’ and ‘the worst present and hopeless future’ represent ‘lived time’. In the dimension of ‘lived human relation’, ‘I who am alone in the world’, ‘fear of being abandoned’, ‘unbreakable relationship trap’, ‘I who am not recognized’ and ‘guilty feeling’ were included.

Conclusion
Results of the study should be helpful in developing personalized suicide prevention programs by showing the various types of suffering deeply ingrained into the personal history of suicide attempters.

Keywords: Attempted suicide; Qualitative research; Psychological stress; Personal narratives; Life change events
### Table 1
Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Participants

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### Table 2
Major Themes of Sufferings in Suicide Attempters

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### References


Peters, Madeline Lorraine, "A Phenomenological Study of the Experiences of Helping Professionals With Learning Disabilities" (2010). Open Access Dissertations. 191. https://scholarworks.umass.edu/open_access_dissertations/191 This Open Access Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. The study was conducted using a qualitative, phenomenological in-depth interview methodology. The study sample consisted of 10 helping professionals with learning disabilities that work in helping professions. Data was collected using audiotaping of interviews and field notes. The psychological categories of daily living tasks include language processing, reading, speaking, and writing. The lived experience of suffering was described in terms of Van Manen’s existential life worlds: corporeal, relational, temporal, and spatial. Corporeal (physical) suffering was related to alcohol dependence syndrome (eg, headache, nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain) and the effects of abrupt withdrawal, and was most acute in the morning. Suffering in the relational life world was seen in recurring feelings of shame, guilt, and denial. Shame was experienced as an intensely painful emotion that resulted from the stigma, being deceitful, and being exposed as weak, dirty, and helpless. The study by Smith is a valuable exploration into the experiences of suffering from the viewpoint of people with drinking problems. This field of study has been sparsely covered by research.